

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for activating and modulating the immune system of an animal comprising:
growing bacteria in a medium;
exposing said bacteria to biological, chemical or physical stress for at least two or more sequential periods of stress wherein each period of stress is approximately one period of time of 20 minutes or less so that the bacteria release a stress response product comprising stress response factors (SRFs);
separating said medium and stress response product from said bacteria to form a separated product;
filtering said separated product to remove substances having a molecular weight of greater than 10kDa to form a filtrate;
administering said filtrate to said animal.

Claims 2-3 (Canceled)

B¹ Claim 4 (Previously presented): The method of claim 3 wherein said non-nutritive media comprises saline at pH values of 6.0 to 8.0.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): The method of claim 4 wherein said saline media is a phosphate-buffered saline having a pH of about 7.0.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the bacteria are selected from the group consisting of Lactobacillus, Staphylococcus, Streptococcus, Pediococcus, Pseudomonas, Bacillus, Escherichia, Listeria, Enterococcus, and Klebsiella.

Claim 7 (Previously presented): The method of claim 6 wherein the bacteria are selected from the group consisting of *L. acidophilus*, *L. caseii*, *L. fermentum*, *L. plantarum*, *L. monocytogenes*, *S. aureus*, *S. typhimurium*, *P. acidolactici*, *B. coryneforme*, *E. coli*, *E. faecium*, *S. pyogenes*, and *K. pneumoniae*.

Claim 8 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the bacteria are propagated at a temperature ranging from approximately 22°C to approximately 37°C.

Claim 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the bacteria are exposed to a stress while they are in the stationary phase of their life cycle.

Claim 11 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the filtering step includes: passing said separated product through a 0.22 µm filter to form a sterilized product; and passing said sterilized product through a filter with a molecular weight cutoff of 10 kDa.

Claim 12 (Currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein the filtrate containing the stress response factors (SRFs) with a molecular weight less than 10kDa is administered to an animal selected from the group consisting of humans, poultry and livestock.

Claim 13 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the stress response product is administered in a concentration of about 1000 to 50,000 AU of said stress response product/ml, corresponding to a reading at 254 nm in the UV range of light wherein the concentration of the stress response factors gives an Optical Density of 1.0 to 5.0.

Claim 14 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the stress response product is administered in a manner selected from the group consisting of orally, topically, and parenterally.

Claim 15 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the animal is administered stress response products having a weight of between 0.5 and 3 kDa.

Claim 16 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the stress response products are administered as an adjuvant for oral or parenteral vaccines.

Claim 17 (Currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein the bacteria are exposed to at least two or more sequential periods of stress wherein each period of stress is of approximately 10-20 minutes.

Claim 18 (Original): The method of claim 17 wherein the bacteria are exposed to sequential periods of stress by transferring the bacteria from growth media into non-nutritive media, then subsequently transferring the bacteria to non-nutritive media sequentially.

Claim 19 (Original): The method of claim 18 wherein the bacteria is exposed to three sequential periods of stress.